

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON STAR LEAD EDITORIAL
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 HEADED "INESCAPABLE SUSPICIONS."

2. ONE PREDICTABLE ACCOMPANIMENT OF ANY ACT OF TERROR-
ISM -- THE BOMBING MURDER OF FORMER CHILEAN AMBASSADOR
ORLANDO LETELIER HERE IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK IS NO
EXCEPTION -- IS THAT ACCUSATIONS FLOURISH IN INVERSE
PROPORTION TO THE EVIDENCE. IT IS, QUITE SIMPLY,
IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY NOW WHO PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT THIS
SORDID ASSASSINATION, WHICH TOOK AN INNOCENT LIFE
ALONG WITH DR. LETELIER.S. THAT IS THE SAD BUT IN-
ESCAPABLE FACT.

3. YET REFLEXIVE SUSPICIONS FOCUSED UPON THE REGIME
NOW IN POWER IN SANTIAGO, THE MILITARY JUNTA OF GEN.
AUGUSTO PINOCHET UGARTE.

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4. FAIRLY OR UNFAIRLY? ORDINARILY, AND IN VIEW OF

THE PROMPT PROTESTATIONS OF INNOCENCE AND SYMPATHY FROM CHILE, THOSE SUSPICIONS WOULD BE OUT OF ORDER. BUT ARE THEY, AS SUSPICIONS OFTEN ARE IN SUCH CASES,

GROUNDLESS OR IMPLAUSIBLE? THEY ARE NOT.

5. A RECORD IS BEFORE US. THAT RECORD SHOWS, IF IT SHOWS NOTHING ELSE, THAT LONG BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION, THE PINOCHET REGIME HAD COMPILED A RECORD OF SHABBY MISTREATMENT OF THIS DISTINGUISHED EXILE.

6. DR. LETELIER HAD SERVED AS BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER UNDER SALVADOR ALLENDE BEFORE ALLENDE WAS OVERTHROWN THREE YEARS AGO -- NOT, LET US NOTE, WITHOUT UNDERHAND ASSISTANCE TO HIS ENEMIES BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

7. AS A DETERMINED FOE OF THE PINOCHET JUNTA WHO HAD RECENTLY MADE HIS INFLUENCE FELT BY WRITING, BY LOBBYING AGAINST FOREIGN ECONOMIC UNDERWRITING OF THE PINOCHET ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, AND BY HELPING ORGANIZE A BROADLY BASED ALL-PARTY OPPOSITION IN EXILE, DR. LETELIER HAD EARNED THE ENMITY OF THE SANTIAGO GOVERNMENT.

8. ARRESTED AT THE COLLAPSE OF THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT, DR. LETELIER HAD FURTHERMORE BEEN SENT, WITHOUT ACCUSATION OR TRIAL, TO A BLEAK AND DEBILITATING ISLAND IMPRISONMENT FROM WHICH THE SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT RELEASED HIM ONLY AFTER THE MOST STRENUOUS INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIONS. AND PROBABLY JUST IN TIME -- SOME OTHER DISTINGUISHED POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE NOT LEFT DAWSON ISLAND ALIVE. ONLY THREE WEEKS AGO, THE REGIME IN SANTIAGO HAD TAKEN THE EXTRAORDINARY STEP -- THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL STEP, SOME FELLOW CHILEAN EXILES BELIEVE -- OF REVOKING DR. LETELIER'S CITIZENSHIP.

9. WHO, THEN, IF NOT THE GOVERNMENT THAT HAD SO ABUSED DR. LETELIER, (ITALICS) WOULD (END ITALICS) BE UNCLASSIFIED

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THE NATURAL SUSPECT AFTER THE GHASTLY ACT THAT TOOK HIS LIFE? NOR IS HIS ASSASSINATION AN ISOLATED EVENT. ON OCTOBER 3, 1974, GEN. CARLOS PRATS GONZALEZ, COMMANDER OF THE CHILEAN ARMY UNDER PRESIDENT ALLENDE, DIED IN A BUENOS AIRES BOMBING. A YEAR LATER, LAST OCTOBER, GUNMEN IN ROME SHOT DOWN ANOTHER PROMINENT CHILEAN POLITICIAN, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE.

10. THIS CONCATENATION OF SHOOTINGS AND BOMBINGS, OF WHICH DR. LETELIER'S ASSASSINATION IS ONLY THE LATEST, (ITALICS) PROVES (END ITALICS) NOTHING. IT DOES,

HOWEVER, TRACE A PATTERN OF CIRCUMSTANCE TOO COMPELLING TO BE CASUALLY DISMISSED. THE ONLY LINK CONNECTING THIS OUTRAGE AND OTHERS TO THE PRESENT CHILEAN GOVERNMENT IS THE LINK OF MOTIVATION, BUT THERE IS ALSO THE EVIDENT AGITATION OF GENERAL PINOCHET'S GOVERNMENT AT THE DAMAGE THE EXILES WERE DOING TO THE STABILITY AND INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION OF HIS JUNTA.

11. ON THE EVIDENCE, WE ARE NOT ENTITLED TO ACCUSE -- ONLY TO SUSPECT. BUT SUSPICIONS ARE NOT, AS WE SAID TO BEGIN WITH, IDLE.

12. THIS WHOLE CHAIN OF EVENTS BEGAN, OF COURSE, WITH THE FALL OF THE ALLENDE REGIME, IN WHOSE UNDERMINING THE U.S. HAD PLAYED A COVERT ROLE. THERE IS A LESSON HERE IF ONLY THIS COUNTRY AND ITS LEADERS WOULD HEED IT. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE INTERFERE ILLEGALLY IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS, WE ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SAME EXTENT FOR THE LAMENTABLE AFTERMATH. TO THE EXTENT THAT WE NOT ONLY RECOGNIZE -- WHICH IS STANDARD DIPLOMATIC PROCEDURE -- BUT ACTIVELY (ITALICS) SUPPORT (END ITALICS) DICTATORIAL REGIMES RULING IN CONTRAVENTION OF OUR OWN POLITICAL VALUES, WE SANCTION TO THE SAME EXTENT THEIR VIOLATIONS OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS. EVEN WITHOUT A FINAL DETERMINATION OF BLAME, THE MURDER OF DR. LETELIER WOULD EXERCISE A SOBERING RESTRAINT ON OUR RECURRENT ZEAL TO CONTROL THE UNCONTROLLABLE FLOW OF UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERNAL POLITICAL EVENTS AND FORTUNES ABROAD. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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